



United States Department of State

*Assistant Secretary of State
for International Organization Affairs*

Washington, D.C. 20520-6319

August 9, 2013

Alejandro J. Garcia Padilla
Governor
Commonwealth of Puerto Rico
P.O. Box 9020082
San Juan, Puerto Rico, 00902-0082

Dear Governor Garcia-Padilla:

Thank you for your May 14 letter regarding Puerto Rico's interest in becoming an Observer in the Association of Caribbean States (ACS). We recognize Puerto Rico's continuing interest in issues affecting the Caribbean.

In exploring the possible participation of a U.S. territory in an international organization, we have to consider several factors, including the degree to which the organization is political in nature and involved in issues of foreign policy (as opposed to one focused on technical, social or cultural matters), and the nature and scope of United States participation in the organization.

As you may be aware, the Department of State has previously declined to support participation by Puerto Rico in the ACS. We remain concerned that the ACS is at least in part a political organization that has taken positions incompatible with U.S. foreign policy. Moreover, the United States is not a member or associate member of the ACS and, based on the organization's founding convention, is excluded from membership. In light of these ongoing concerns, we cannot support Puerto Rico's request to participate in the ACS as an Observer.

As you know, the United States remains committed to working with countries in the Caribbean to address common concerns, and we continue to work closely with other organizations in the region, including the Caribbean Community and the Organization of American States. Please be assured of our continuing commitment to working with you and your government to advance U.S. interests in the region.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "H. Dean Pittman".

H. Dean Pittman
Acting Assistant Secretary
Bureau of International Organization Affairs